ARCHIVES

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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CONTENTS

		Page
I.	Marriage and the Family in the Eastern Zone of Germany.	1
II.	Church and Society in Western Germany	8
III.	The Attitude of French Protestants to the Policies of Mendès-France	13
IV.	Concerning Mistakes in Anti-Religious Propaganda.	15
V.	Church and Industrial Labour in Japan	19
VI.	Statement of the Church of the Minahasa (Indonesia) on Communism.	21
VII.	Social Action in a Bombay Slum.	24

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I. MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY IN THE EASTERN ZONE OF GERMANY

(from a correspondent)

The draft of a new "Family Law", incorporating a new Family Code for the East German Democratic Republic, has aroused very lively discussion. The questions raised in the Draft Law have been discussed not only by experts, jurists and theologians, but also by the leaders of the "Frauenhilfe" (women's work) of the Church in parish-groups, and by the young people. The pastors have had to arrange evening lectures in all the parishes, both urban and rural, in order to give Christian answers to the tremendous number of questions raised by their church-members. These lectures on marriage and the family attracted so many people, that on many occasions churches and parish-halls were filled to overflowing long before the lectures began. One General Superintendent had to start speaking 50 minutes before the appointed time to a church filled with people, and then to repeat his lecture until late in the night to a second audience. In many places the composition of the audience was striking; it was made up not only of the usual church-members, but also of many non-church-goers, especially of young men and women. The audiences were so interested in what the lecturers said that in one town they applauded by clapping loudly, and the speakers had to stop speaking several times - an expression of appreciation seldom heard in churches. The Evangelical Academy of Berlin-Brandenburg arranged a conference in the parish-hall of St. Peters' Church in East Berlin, entitled "The new Laws relating to the Family in the German Democratic Republic and what the Bible says about Marriage". In a very short time it received 600 applications to attend, 200 of which had to be refused owing to lack of space. The conference lasted one day and was attended by 400 people; the main lecture was given by Dr. Franz-Reinhold Hildebrandt (Evangelical Church of the Union), and was followed with four discussion-groups.

The interesting thing is that these and other public discussions of the proposed new law regulating family relation, were officially encouraged. Government representatives of the German Democratic Republic had publicly pressed for discussion of the new "Family Bill" after its appearance in the summer of 1954. However, as the result of various reactions in the press, Dr. Hilde Benjamin (Minister of Justice of the East German government) made an announcement that "the public discussion on this Draft Bill would be closed at the end of November".

The East Berlin newspaper "Tägliche Rundschau" of December 4th, 1954, reported that "The Ministry of Justice will now examine the many expressions of opinion, most of which are fundamentally in agreement but which contain many valuable suggestions; it will then continue this important legislative task".

The Church attitude has been extremely critical. At the Conference of the Evangelical Academy Dr. Hildebrandt put forward the proposal that the Law should be reconsidered by a study commission consisting of representatives of the State and of the Church. In his opinion it was not sufficient merely to send suggestions to the State authorities. The Conference of Landeskirchen in the German Democratic Republic produced a statement on September 1st, 1954, criticizing specific aspects of the proposed law. (A summary of this statement is published below). Individual Landeskirchen also sent their findings to the State authorities. Bishop W. Weskamm (the Catholic Bishop of Berlin) sent a letter on August 28th, 1954, to President Grotewohl in the name of the Bishops and episcopal Commissars in the German Democratic Republic.

As Dr. Hildebrandt declared, the problems involved in the "Family Law" are "a matter which is universal and existential, which should make the Christian Churches think more deeply about the biblical view of parenthood and marriage". But he warned people not to confuse or to identify the biblical view with bourgeois conceptions. The purpose of the "Family Law" is not to replace certain obsolete conceptions and legal provisions belonging to a bourgeois age with other conceptions and legal provisions better adapted to the present development of human society. The "Family Law" is not a reformist step, adapting obsolete views to altered circumstances; it is a revolutionary measure which will replace the old conception of marriage and the family by an entirely new conception of human relationships - in this case between man and wife, parents and children. The depth and significance of the new "Family Law" can be understood only within the framework of the Marxist conception of man.

Draft of the new "Code of Family Law" for the East German Zone

The "Draft of the new Code of Family Law in the DDR" appeared in the summer of 1954 as a thick pamphlet (56 pages), published by the Kongress-Verlag, Berlin, W.8., and edited by the "Office of the President of the National Council of the National Front of Democratic Germany". After an introduction by the Minister for Justice in the DDR, Hilde Benjamin, the first part of the pamphlet contains a commentary on the new "Family Law" in four sections (pp. 5-25) under the following headings:

(1) Promotion of the interests of women, children and the family.
(2) The basis of the new "Family Law".
(3) The most important provisions of the proposed Law.
(4) The significance of the new "Code of Family Law" for Germany as a whole.

The second part (pp. 26-56) contains the actual text of the Law, in 135 paragraphs:

		paragraphs
Basic principles		1 - 4
Part I.	Marriage	5 - 34
Part II.	Parents and Children	35 - 90
Part III.	Other Relatives	91 - 98
Part IV.	Guardianship	99 - 135

* * *

The following are extracts from the Commentary on the "Family Law".

(1) Promotion of the interests of women, children and the family.

" .... The new Constitution of the German Democratic Republic contained decisive legislation concerning the family; it stipulates that man and wife have equal rights, that neither parents nor children should suffer disadvantages if children are born out of wedlock, contains general principles on the development of the family, and stresses that any regulations contrary to the new Constitution are cancelled .....

"Any measure is doomed to failure, if it does not take full account of the social and economic conditions in the country. The equal status of women is closely bound up with the promotion of Socialism. Without Socialism there

is no right to work, and unless they have the right to work, women cannot achieve equal status with men.... But women must be in a position to avail themselves of these rights. They must not be the slaves of the house, tied to the kitchen and the children, stifled and crushed by an endless round of boring, petty, unproductive, deadly housework. The real liberation of women will only begin when the mass-struggle begins against the pettiness of domestic drudgery, and its tasks are taken over by the socialist large-scale economy.... Women's work in the home must be cut down, so that even a married wife and mother can undertake work outside without damage to her health, thereby becoming really economically independent. This fact was recognized by the Law concerning the Protection of Mother and Child and the Rights of Women, passed on September 27th, 1950; it includes measures such as maternity benefits, childern's allowances for mothers with large families, and homes where the children of unmarried mothers can be brought up at the expense of the State. During the Five Year Plan, 60,000 new places will be created in childern's homes, 40,000 places in crêches and 160,000 in day-nurseries, playgrounds and milk-kitchens.... Other measures try to relieve women from other kinds of domestic work, by setting up more laundries, sewing and mending shops, etc., and to help working mothers to obtain living accommodation. It is also emphasised that the husband should help with the housework, when his wife has a job outside. If both husband and wife are working, they will probably earn enough to pay someone else to help with the domestic work.... The measures dealing with the realtions between parents and children stress the welfare of the child above all else."

(4) The general significance of the "Family Code".

" .... Many jurists in Western Germany are beginning to study the situation in the DDR (East German Government) and our efforts to give women real equality of status. In the West the old methods are applied: women are deterred from struggling for equal status by having it impressed upon them that equality of status would only bring them disadvantages.... The progressive women of Western Germany have drawn up a Draft Law concerning the Equal Status of Women; when this is discussed, the proposed "Family Code" of the DDR will certainly provide useful arguments, and will show people in Western Germany what democracy is like in the Eastern Zone. The new "Family Code" is, therefore, a step towards a united, peace-loving, democratic Germany."

The following are exceprts from those paragraphs which in the words of the booklet are an "Introduction to the most important clauses of the Law."

The Basis of the "Family Law"

(Paragraph 1) "The 'Family Law' of the DDR regulates the personal and financial relationships between married couples, parents and children and other relatives, and between guardians and wards, for the purpose of protecting the family and educating the children in the spirit of democracy, socialism, patriotism and international friendship."

(Paragraph 2) "Marriage is a life-long comradeship between man and woman, based on equal rights, mutual love and respect, which promotes the development of both partners and the education of their children."

(Paragraph 3) "Equality of status between the sexes can only be achieved through the cooperation of women in the state, industry and every other sphere of social life. This Law therefore gives women in the family a position which

combines their right to occupational training and occupational work harmoniously with their duties as wives and mothers."

(Paragraph 4) "The care of the children is not only the parents' rights; it is also their duty to the State, to society and to the children. The parents can fulfil their responsibilities in educating their children only if they cooperate closely with the schools and youth organisations."

Part I - Marriage.

Commentary:
"The age of legal consent for both sexes is after their majority, i.e. after the age of 18.... There is now no reason for permitting a girl to marry earlier (as in bourgeois law), in order to remove "the stigma of illegitimacy" if she were expecting a child, since illegitimacy has now no stigma attached to it.... The Law expressly states that the husband and wife have the right to live apart, and that all matters affecting their common interests must be settled by both partners with their mutual consent."

Draft Law:
(Paragraph 5) "Marriage is not permissible unless both the man and woman are over 18 years of age."

(Paragraph 8, (1)) "Husband and wife must fulfil their marital obligations to one another. They have the right to live apart, if this is necessitated by their training or their work."

(Paragraph 9) "All matters connected with social life must be settled by both partners, with mutual consent. But each partner can make individual decisions concerning the training or work he or she undertakes, or what social activities he or she engages in."

Commentary:
"A husband and wife may take the same surname (either that of the husband or that of the wife), or they may retain their original surnames.... This is another expression of the equal status of women."

Draft Law:
(Paragraph 10, (1)) "A husband and wife may either take the same surname or retain their original surnames. If they decide to take the same name, they can choose either the man's or the woman's surname."
(2) "If husband and wife retain their original surnames, they must agree when they marry whether their children will have the name of the father or that of the mother. The children must all have the same surname."
(3) "Decisions concerning paragraph 2 must be taken when the marriage take place and entered in the Family Book. Such decisions are irrevocable."

Commentary:
"The law of maintenance is very important. It expresses the equal status of women, who hereby accept equal responsibilities. Marriage is no longer regarded as a maintenance institution for women."

Draft Law:
(Paragraph 12, (1)) "Husband and wife are responsible for one another's maintenance."
(2) "If the husband and wife live together, they must both contribute (according to their power and ability) to their joint maintenance, either by working in the home or outside the home. The maintenance includes the household

expenses and the personal needs of both partners; also the cost of occupational training in accordance with their means."

(3) "If the husband and wife agree to live apart, the maintenance must be ensured through the payment of an allowance in money."

(Paragraph 13, (2)) "If one of the partners is incapacitated by illness or old age or any other reason, he or she has the right to be maintained by the other partner in a manner appropriate to their position."

Commentary:

"The Draft Law contains new provisions concerning the property of husband and wife. The new Constitution did away with the husband's right to do as he thought fit with his wife's property which she 'brought into the marriage'. In actual practice the new Constitution was interpreted by completely separating the property of husband and wife (including what they had before marriage and what they acquired during marriage). But this arrangement placed the wife at a disadvantage.... The new Draft Law interprets 'joint property' as the actual acquisitions gained by work during the marriage. Moreover, a woman who has been unable to save anything, owing to her duties as wife and mother, is now entitled by law to a share in her husband's savings. This legislation is based on society's full recognition of the wife's work in looking after the home and the children."

Draft Law:

(Incorporates what is stated in the commentary).

Commentary:

"The divorce laws are very important for the protection of marriage and the family. According to the new Draft Law, the reasons for seeking divorce must be very carefully examined.... Divorce shall be granted only if the marriage has lost its meaning for both partners, for the children and for society.... Any decisions concerning the care of the children will be based on the welfare of the child; the decision will be made in cooperation with the "Aid to Youth Department" and the "Family Education Department". This way of treating divorce and its consequences removes the necessity for stating which partner is to blame. (In bourgeois law the children are left with the "innocent" partner). In our view, the only factor determining the fate of the child should be, where it will be looked after best. With regard to maintenance the Draft Law is based on the view that after the divorce each partner must maintain himself or herself. He or she can only claim maintenance temporarily, until he or she has found work."

Draft Law:

(Paragraph 29, (1)) "A marriage can be dissolved only if there are serious reasons for doing so, and if the law has proved that the marriage has lost its meaning for the partners, for the children and for society. Factors justifying divorce may already have been present even before the marriage."

(2) On these conditions the Law can dissolve a marriage:
firstly, if both partners apply for divorce. In this case, if there are children under age, the parents must inform the Court what provision they intend to make for their children, so that their welfare may be assured;
secondly, a marriage may be dissolved at the request of one of the partners (even against the wishes of the other), if the consequences do not involve undue hardship for the other, and do not affect the welfare of the minor children."

(Paragraph 30, (1)) "In the divorce settlement the Court decides which parent is to have charge of the children, and who is to maintain them, and what amount is to be paid."

(Paragraph 32, (1)) "If one of the partners is unable to support himself or herself after the divorce (either by working or by other means), the other partner must pay him or her adequate maintenance for a temporary period, not exceeding two years after the divorce is enforced."

Part II - Parents and Children.

Commentary:

"The education of the children is the mutual responsibility of the parent to the State and society.... The parents have the right and the duty to look af ter the child, to educate it as an independent, responsible and patriotic citiz of the democratic State, to train it in an occupation suited to its capacity, t look after its possessions in the child's interest, and to represent it before the Law. These responsibilities are shared by both parents. They are assisted b the local state authorities, which will take the necessary steps to ensure the child's welfare if the parents fail to fulfil their duties."

Draft Law:

(Paragraph 39, (1)) "Parental care is the responsibility of both parents, who should settle all these questions together."

(Paragraph 40, (1)) "If the parents live apart, the local Council will decide (if the parents cannot agree about it) which of them is to be responsible for the children."

(Paragraph 44, (1)) "If the parents fail to fulfil their parental obligations, or if for other reasons the welfare or the economic interests of the child are endangered, the local Council will make the necessary dispositions and see that they are enforced."

(2) "If other measures prove inadequate, the local Council can transfer the child to a suitable family, or place it in a home. The local Council has the right to deprive the parents (or one of the parents) of part of their parent al responsibility."

(3) "If the parents fail completely to meet their parental responsibilitie as an extreme measure they may be deprived altogether of their parental rights. This will be decided at the suggestion of the local Council through the Court of Law."

Commentary:

"Illegitimate children have the same legal position with relation to their parents as legitimate children. The father may sign an official document recognising the child, or he may be forced to recognise it (legal proceedings being taken against him on the child's behalf). Any man who had intercourse with the mother during the period of conception may be claimed to be the father. He may produce medical evidence to prove that he cannot be the father. But he cannot escape responsibility (as hitherto) simply by proving that the mother had intercourse with another man also during this time.... The illegitimate child has full rights to inherit from its father, as long as it is under 18, or if over 18 incapable of work; it also has the right to inherit from the father's relatives, if they were responsible for the child's maintenance when they died."

Draft Law:

(Incorporates what is stated in the commentary).

Commentary:

"The Draft Law is based on the principle that an adoption creates a relationship similar to that between parent and child. The purpose of adoption is to ensure that a child is brought up in a working family.... "

Draft Law:

(Incorporates what is stated in the commentary).

* * *

Church Conference held in the Eastern Zone of Germany, to discuss the new draft "Family Law" in the German Democratic Republic.

(Conference of the member-churches of the Evangelical Church in Germany in the German Democratic Republic)

- Excerpt from Memorandum of 1st September 1954. -

At this church conference in Berlin, discussion centred on the draft for a new Family Code proposed by the Ministry of Justice of the East Zone. The discussion clearly revealed the interest in establishing the same legislation in the two Zones of Germany. The conference passed a resolution stressing the views resulting from the Protestant conception of marriage as a God-given order in the field of human relations. One of the objections to the draft Law is that it does not take account of the fact that the overwhelming majority of the population in Eastern and Western Germany are members of a Christian Church. It is the duty of the State to protect marriage as an institution essential for the nation; but it is not the task of the State to impose specific political purposes upon the family life of its citizens. For these reasons the conference must reject the legal definition of marriage as outlined in the first two paragraphs of the draft Law.

Political ideas like those contained in paragraph 1 of the draft Law, e.g. "democracy", "socialism", "patriotism", "international friendship", had no place in a Family Law; in fact they endangered marriage. Referring to the equal status of women, the Memorandum states that the equality of men and women is rooted in the Gospel; equality, however, should not be confused with similarity. Another point made by the Memorandum is that decisions concerning the welfare of children must not be entrusted to non-family or State agencies.

The Memorandum also objects to paragraph 4 of the draft Law, according to which youth organisations are co-responsible for the children's education on an equal footing with the schools. The Church must protest whenever Protestant parents are suspected of being "irresponsible" or of "failing in their parental duties" just because they do not avail themselves of the help of the Free German Youth organisation in the education of their childern.... The right to give children a Christian education should be guaranteed. The Memorandum also objects to paragraph 38, dealing with parental care.

The Memorandum also disagrees with the new Law's views on divorce. The Memorandum considers that abolishing the question of guilt will facilitate divorce and "undermine people's belief in marriage as a serious institution". Limitation to a general clause invites a very broad interpretation and must therefore be rejected. The Memorandum raises the question whether divergence between the political views of man and wife would suffice to fulfil the condition "that this marriage has lost its meaning for the partners, for the children and for society".

Going into details, the Memorandum then criticises certain gaps in the list of legal obstacles to marriage; and the fact that families cannot be recognised by a common name, resulting in confusion if husband and wife have different surnames (as envisaged in paragraph 10). Nor should it be regarded as normal for both husband and wife to work outside the home, sometimes even in different places. "Living together permanently is an integral part of marriage and should find its expression in a common home".

Summing up, the Memorandum makes it clear that the Protestant Church cannot agree with the main points of the draft Law. Moreover, there was a tendency in the wording of the draft Law, and also in official commentaries upon it, to place marriage and the family under political control. In the Church's opinion this is bound to destroy the independence of marriage and family life.

Note:

It should be noted that there are no neutral guardianship authorities in the German Democratic Republic. Their functions have been taken over by the district Councils, which are political organs.

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II. CHURCH AND SOCIETY IN WESTERN GERMANY

Extract from a debate in the West German Parliament

(In the discussion on the London and Paris Treaties on December 16th, 1954, the Bundestag - the West German Parliament - debated a letter written by a number of well-known Protestant leaders, addressed to the members of the Bundestag. We print here an extract from the official minutes of the session, dealing with the debate on this letter.)

Erler (Socialist):

"Now a final word about the expression 'Leave me out of it' (Ohne mich) with which the Government Party reproached us Socialists in this House, as if it were we who were spreading this slogan about the country. We have again and again expressed our views on this negative attitude. But please remember one thing. In our country today - apart from the young people who are immediately affected - there are a great number of people, hundred of thousands, probably millions of them, who are experiencing a serious conflict of conscience, (Hear, hear! from the Socialists) in view of the fact that compulsory military service in the Federal Republic evokes compulsory military service in the Soviet Zone, (Calls from the Centre: "they've had that already a long time!") and that we are helping to oppose one German army to another, both armed to the teeth, with the frightful prospect of a possible civil war." (Applause from the Socialists).

There is a human force making for unity in our country, which ignores the obstacles created by the totalitarian régime in the Eastern Zone, and tries to give Germans the opportunity of talking together freely and feeling that they

belong to the same nation; this human force for unity is the Evangelical Church. Everyone who knows what it is like in the Russian Zone will admit I am right when I say that this human force provides a hope that people need not simply submit to domination by totalitarianism. (Good! Good!, from the Socialists). And now a letter comes from this same Evangelical Church to the members of the Bundestag (you have all read it), signed by some of the most outstanding men in the Church, including five Church Presidents and several eminent theologians. This letter says:

> "We do not think that the political, legal and moral bases for such a step in face of the present situation are sufficiently clear for the State to claim the divine right to pass such laws. The many expressions of unrest among the people show to what extent the proposed measures have caused dilemmas of conscience among large numbers of our people."

Ladies and Gentlemen, although you will agree that these people are convinced Protestant Christians, I certainly do not expect you (even if you are members of the Christian Democratic Union) to share their views entirely. I only ask you one thing: not simply to brush this conflict of conscience aside, on the pretext that it is only a question of 'Leave me out of it!' For that is not true." (Prolonged applause from the Socialists).

Wacher (Hof) (Christian Democratic Union of Bavaria):
"Mr. Erler, in reply to the letter which you quote, I should like to mention the attitude of Dr. Meiser, Bishop of Bavaria. He says:

> "The statement on rearmament made by the Rhinish Pastors' Association must not be regarded as representing the attitude of the whole Evangelical Church in Germany. Its signatories are solely responsible for the statement."

(Cries from the Socialists - Disturbance).

Erler (Socialist):
"Ladies and Gentlemen, may I reply very simply to this point?"

Dr. Friedensburg (Christian Democratic Union):
"One question please. Does Mr. Erler know whether these same Presidents of the Evangelical Church have raised objections to the extensive rearmament measures taken in the Russian Zone?" (Cries of "Very good!" from the Centre ; Cries of "Yes!" from the Socialists).

Erler (Socialist):
"I will answer the last question first. I do not know all the gentlemen who signed the letter. But those whom I do know are certainly equally opposed to the rearmament which has already taken place in the Eastern Zone. (Applause from the Socialists) With regard to the second question, I did not say that the letter came from the Evangelical Church. (Cries of "Quite right!" from the Socialists) I am very glad that the Evangelical Church as a Church does not interfere in political discussions. (Storm of applause from the Socialists) I only asked you to give due consideration to these members of the Evangelical Church. (Sabel: "That's not what you said, Mr. Erler!"

Kunze (Bethel) (Christian Democratic Union):
"Mr. Erler, do you know that the number of pastors who signed these appeals was only 500 at the most out of a total of over 15,000 Protestant clergy? Second question: Do you know that Bishop Lilje (the Vice-President of the Council

of the Evangelical Church and also President of the Lutheran World Federation) said in this connection, that there is no longer any militarism in the Federal Republic, but that in both parts of Germany there is a religious awakening of youth? Lilje, who was in Geneva for discussions with representatives of the L.W.F. in Geneva, emphasises that young people in Germany have the question of rearmament very much on their minds. His personal opinion was that from the po itical standpoint the formation of a new German army could not be avoided. In certain circumstances it was a Christian duty to bear arms." (Cries from the Socialists: "That was not the question!").

Erler (Socialist):

"Mr. Kunze, I know that is Bishop Lilje's view. But it only proves that sincere Protestant Christians may have very differing views on these questions and that it is a great mistake to think that anyone has a monopoly of Christianity." (Loud applause from the Socialists).

Dr. Friedensburg (Christian Democratic Union):

"I should like to raise another point. Where and when have these Church Presidents, of whom you spoke, sent a letter to the People's Chamber or to the Government in Pankow, objecting to rearmament in the Russian Zone?" (Loud cries from the Socialists).

Erler (Socialist):

"Dr. Friedensburg, I am very surprised that you suddenly regard a public pronouncement as less important than a letter to an institution, whose democratic value you appreciate as much as I do." (Applause from the Socialists).

Frau Dr. Rehling (Christian Democratic Union):

"Mr. Erler, I should like to ask you if you think that these pastors' associations and Church Presidents, who have sent us this letter, possess the necessary expert knowledge to decide on such questions. (Applause in the Centre, cries of "Oho" from the Socialists). Or is this letter a completely non-commit statement, which is supposed to influence us in our political decision?" (Appl from the Centre).

Erler (Socialist):

"Ladies and Gentlemen, I think it is rather an unusual procedure, in a House which receives a large number of letters motivated by self-interest (live ly applause from the Socialists) suddenly to treat men like Professor Gollwitze of Bonn, President Held of Düsseldorf, President Wilm of Bielefeld and Presider Stempel of Speyer as if they were irresponsible members of the population." (Cries from the Centre).

Gontrum (Christian Democratic Union):

"Mr. Erler, I fully agree with you when you say that the Church should no engage in politics. Has it not occurred to you that this phrase, spoken by the Church, is precisely a political slogan? It speaks in the name of the Gospel, for the sake of conscience, in the service of the Gospel. A message from the Church claims to be a message that applies to politics; and that is unheard-of in the Protestant Church."

Erler (Socialist):

"Ladies and Gentlemen, the appeal begins: "As Christians, who are in responsible positions in the Protestant Church...". That makes it perfectly clear it is not the Church which is speaking, but Christians who are members of the

Church. Secondly, I share your dislike of the Church's taking part in the party political struggle. I only wish that that were said to all Churches in all the parties represented in this House."

Bausch (Christian Democratic Union):
"Mr. Erler, are you aware of the fact that the majority of the men whom you have mentioned (including some Church Presidents) are followers of Herr Heinemann? (Loud calls from the Socialists of "Oh! Oh!"). Are you aware of the fact that at the Federal Election on September 6th, 1953, Herr Heinemann's policy was categorically rejected by the German people?" (Cries of disagreement from the Socialists).

Erler (Socialist):
"Ladies and Gentlemen, I do not think it would be worth while to discuss this sort of attitude towards the former Secretary for Home Affairs." (Loud applause from the Socialists. Cries of disagreement from the Centre. Huth: "But that is fair, Mr. Erler!"; Bausch: "I have another question to raise!" General disorder).

Bausch (Christian Democratic Union):
"Mr. Erler, do you realise that we are living in a democratic country, and that in this democratic country the Bundestag would do well to pay some attention to the votes of the people registered on September 6th, 1953?" (Loud disagreement from the Socialists. More disorder).

Erler (Socialist):
"Mr. Bausch, I did not intend to ...." (Disorder continues).

Frau Wolff (Berlin) (Socialist):
"Does Mr. Bausch realise that Herr Gollwitzer has written a book, copies of which have been given free by the Ministry for Home Affairs to the members of the Youth Coordinating Committee?" (Cries from the Centre: "Yes, we know!")

Kemmer (Bamberg):
"Bausch, sit down and just say, "Yes, I know"." (Disagreement on the left. Much disorder).

Bausch (Christian Democratic Union):
"To the question addressed to me, I can only reply that I know Herr Gollwitzer's book very well. But I was talking about Herr Heinemann's political views and his followers, and pointing out that the German people have categorically rejected those views of his." ("Quite right" from the Centre. Disagreement from the Socialists. Disorder).

Erler (Socialist):
"Ladies and Gentlemen, may I sum up this game of repartee by expressing my deep regret that the members of this House (or at any rate many of the members of one party whose title includes the word "Christian") are incapable of debating seriously upon the deep misgivings of conscience felt by a number of leading Churchmen?" (Loud applause from the Socialists. Disagreement from the Centre. Walter: "One question, please!").

Walter (Democratic Party):
"Mr. Erler, in your opinion is the letter from the Pastors to be considered any differently from the thousands of letters which we have received from

the other Zone, ostensibly from workers in factories? As we know, the letters from the other Zone were dictated by a certain Government; do you think the letter from the Pastors was dictated by the same source?" (Laughter and cries from the Socialists).

Erler (Socialist):

"I should like to answer Mr. Walter's question quite definitely. I think he ought to remember an earlier period of his life (Applause from the Socialists in order to understand the difference between a statement from free men and letters which are written under the pressure of a tyranny. But there is a difference (Continuous applause from the Socialists).

During the afternoon session Dr. Adenauer spoke on the problem of rearmamer

Dr. Adenauer:

"Ladies and Gentlemen, before commenting on the remarks of Mr. Ollenhauer, I should like to say something in reply to Mr. Erler. He has spoken very impressively about the conflict of conscience. In reply I should like to say, Mr. Erler (and I ask you to believe me, just as I fully believe you), that I personally am weighed down by the same conflict of conscience in putting this motion before you. (Applause from the Government parties). Don't you think, Ladies and Gentlemen, since I cannot be suspected of being a militarist, nor an advocate of heavy expenditure on armaments, that I too suffered deeply when I had to place this Bill before you? (Dr. von Brentano: "Very good!"). And I must place it before you because as far as I can see, if we do not rearm we shall be handing over the 50 million Germans in the Western Zone, plus the 18 million in the Russion Zone, to slavery; furthermore, if a war should break out between the two opposing powers, then this war will be fought out on our soil; it is our towns and villages and fields which will be devastated, like those of Korea; it is our men, women and children who will suffer. (Mr. Welke: "That is true in any case, Dr. Adenauer."). Please believe me, therefore, Ladies and Gentlemen, when I say that my conscience suffered just as much as yours, before I decided to take this step...."

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III. THE ATTITUDE OF FRENCH PROTESTANTS TO THE POLICIES OF MENDES-FRANCE

(The following notes on the attitude of French Protestants to Mr. Mendès-France are by Prof. Roger Mehl, of Strasbourg. Professor Mehl wrote this statement before the fall of the Mendès-France government.)

The attitude of French Protestants toward the policies of Mendès-France is not essentially different from that of the French people as a whole. This attitude is positive and is reflected well enough in the views of the French Protestant weekly newspaper, Réforme. There are nevertheless three groups in opposition or semi-opposition:

1) Those who come from business circles and who fear the tendencies in the economic and social policies of the government of Mendès-France, although these policies claim to follow classical lines and to be the enemy of specualtions. But these business circles would have liked a fundamental reform of the structure of the social security system, and a policy more favourable to small business. They fear especially that the French economic interests would be compromised in North Africa by the liberal policy of the government.

2) Those who are among the warmest supporters of the European Defense Community and for whom all alternative solutions are excluded. They blame Mendès-France for not having supported the movement for European Unity and for not having put his weight behind the vote on the European Defense Community. On this point the Protestants are marked by a greater doctrinal rigidity than the Catholics or at least certain Catholics (for example, Robert Schumann, the former foreign minister, or M. Pflimlin, a former minister of agriculture and originator of the proposed "green pool" for a European agricultural community). Such Protestants suspect Mendès-France of attachment to an outmoded form of nationalism. At least they reproach him for a lack of boldness in the development of supranational structures. It is possible that the present efforts of Mendès-France to establish the supranational principle in the organisation of a European armaments authority is modifying current attitudes.

3) Those who are not only hostile to the E.D.C., but are opposed to any rearmament of Western Germany and who have recognised only belatedly, and in spite of the warnings which have been heaped upon them, that all alternative solutions to the E.D.C. would nevertheless involve German rearmament. Such people are found among the intellectuals who have always been very sensitive to the arguments and to the radical attitude of Prof. Karl Barth and Dr. Martin Niemöller. (cf. "An Open Letter to a Foreigner Dissatisfied with France" by George Casalis, a young Protestant Theologian, in which he maintains that the defeat of the E.D.C., instead of being a setback for Europe has actually restored its chances). But it should be pointed out that this group has been seriously split by the policy of Mendès-France. Many who opposed the E.D.C. supported the Paris treaty. This paradoxical attitude can be explained by:

a. the confidence which Mendès-France inspired. They accept much more easily a European policy directed by him than one directed by Mr. Pleven or especially by Mr. Bidault, whose moral prestige has fallen considerably because of his ignoble attitude toward both Mr. Mendès-France and Mr. Mitterand (the minister of the Interior);

b. the clear recognition that France could not say "no", a second time without risking total diplomatic isolation;

c. the feeling that a European supranationalism was premature, that it was necessary to get rid of the mystical halo which certain people had given the E.D.C. In consequence the Paris treaties are more acceptable than the E.D.C

Outside of these three groups who for diverse and contradictory reasons, and with various nuances, are hostile to the policy of Mendès-France, French Protestantism as a whole appears to wish ardently for the continuance of this experiment. It corresponds at many points to the expressed desires of the Protestant Federation of France and of the individual church synods, in particular the French Reformed Church. The satisfaction of Protestants is expressed especially on the following points:

a. liquidation of the war in Indo-China in which the prime minister showed great courage and skill;

b. attitude both loyal and prudent in the Tunisian and Moroccan questions: there is rejoicing that the mother country is keeping her promises of internal autonomy (although there are some discordant voices amongst the North African colonists). The Protestant Federation of France has organised many consultative conferences in North Africa;

c. the offensive against alcoholism ; various ecclesiastical spokesmen have expressed publicly their gratitude to the government;

d. lifting of the "mortgage" of the E.D.C. which was weighing heavily on the political life of the entire country;

e. a political approach which consists in addressing itself to political personalities rather than to parties - even over the heads of parties - has been generally appreciated. This accords with the individualistic attitude of the French Protestant. It is not clear, however, whether it does not also undermine the normal operation of the Parliamentary system.

On the whole both the conservative and the radical circles of French Protestantism rejoice at the presence of a government head who has restored to the executive a greater authority and dignity. The circles more to the left, while supporting the Mendès-France policy, display a certain reticence as to the style of his government: the prime minister has spoken each week by radio to the countr he is not satisfied with a Parliamentary majority and he intends even to improve this very anomalous majority by a constant appeal to public opinion. This policy which implicitly assumes a distinction between the elected representatives of the people and their real attitude, arouses a certain uneasiness. Similar attempt made in the past have not left pleasant memories: Gaston Doumergue, Pétain, de Gaulle.

Finally, it seems impossible to disassociate the attitude of French Protestantism toward foreign affairs from that which it holds toward internal policy The Mendès-France government has been skillful in making a policy of one piece in such a way that even those who hesitate to support his policy of semi-europeanism do not wish to lose the benefit of his internal policy.

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IV. "CONCERNING MISTAKES IN ANTI-RELIGIOUS PROPAGANDA"

(The decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union "On Mistakes in the Conduct of Scientific Atheist Propaganda Among the Population", issued November 11th, 1954, is regarded by many competent observers as the most important official pronouncement about religion in the Soviet Union since the war. We are, therefore, reproducing the complete text of the decree for the information of our readers.)

Mistakes in Atheist Propaganda.

In accordance with its programme the Communist Party is carrying on propaganda of scientific enlightenment in the materialist outlook, aimed at constantly raising the consciousness of the working masses and gradually freeing them from religious prejudices.... At the same time the Party has always considered it essential to avoid causing any offence to the feelings of believers.

The CPSU Central Committee is in possession of facts which testify that crude mistakes have recently been allowed in a number of places in the course of scientific atheist propaganda among the population.

Instead of developing systematic, painstaking work in the propaganda of natural scientific knowledge and in ideological struggle against religion, insulting attacks against the clergy and against believers practising religious rites have been permitted in certain central and local newspapers and in statements made by some lecturers and speakers. There have been cases when, on the pages of the press and in oral statements made by propagandists, some ministers of religious cults and believers were quite groundlessly represented as persons not meriting political confidence. In a number of districts instances of administrative interference in the activitiy of religious associations and groups and of offensive attitude towards the clergy on the part of local organisations and individual persons have been allowed to take place.

Such mistakes in anti-religious propaganda are in radical contradiction to the programme and policy of the Communist Party with regard to religion and believers, and are a violation of a number of directives issued by the Party on the inadmissibility of offending the feelings of believers.

Lack of Party Control.

The CPSU Central Committee considers it wrong that many Party organisations have withdrawn from day-to-day supervision over the work of scientific atheist propaganda, that they do not concern themselves with careful selection of propagandist cadres. Persons ignorant in science and in the problems of atheist propaganda, and occasionally hacks whose knowledge is limited to anecdotes and stories about ministers of religion, are permitted to write for the press and deliver lectures and reports. Such an irresponsible approach to the selection of authors of articles, of lecturers and speakers, and the absence of due control on the part of party organisations over the proper course of scientific atheist propaganda causes serious harm to the educative work of cultural enlightenment carried on among the population.

Directive to Party organisations.

The CPSU Central Committee has decided:

To make it incumbent upon regional and district committees of the CPSU Central Committees of the Communist Parties of Union Republics and all party organisations drastically to eliminate the mistakes in atheist propaganda and on no account to allow in the future any kind of offence to the sentiments of believers and ministers of religion, or administrative interference in the activity of the Church. It is imperative to bear in mind that offensive actions with regard to the Church, to the clergy or to believing citizens are incompatible with the line adopted by the Party and the State in the conduct of scientific atheist propaganda and are in contradiction to the USSR Constitution, whi provides freedom of conscience to Soviet citizens.

Persecution strenghtens faith.

As a result of profound changes in the social and economic conditions of life, of the liquidation of the exploiter classes and the victory of Socialism in the USSR, as a result of the successful development of science and the gener rise of the country's cultural standard, the majority of the population of the Soviet Union has long ago freed itself from religious survivals; the consciousness of the workers has grown immensely. At the same time one cannot discount the fact that there are citizens who, while taking an active part in the life of the country and honestly fulfilling their civic duty towards their motherland, are still under the influence of various kinds of religious beliefs. Our Party has always demanded and will continue in future to demand that a consider ate and attentive attitude should be displayed towards these believing persons Accordingly it is all the more stupid and harmful to cast political doubt on this or that Soviet citizen on the grounds of his religious convictions. Profou patient and competently organised scientific atheist propaganda among believers will help them in the long run to free themselves from religious errors. On the contrary, any sort of administrative measures and offensive attacks against believers and ministers of religion can only bring harm and lead to the confirmat ion and even to the strengthening of religious prejudices among them.

In conducting scientific atheist propaganda one should take it into accou that one cannot equate the position of the Church in the country of Socialism with the position of the Church in an exploiter society.... In a bourgeois soci the Church is a support and a weapon of the dominant classes, which make use of it in the aims of enslaving the workers. This does not exclude the possibility even in capitalist society, of individual ministers of religion going over, as indeed they do go over, to the point of view of the workers on a number of basi political questions. These ministers of religion, however, for their behaviour which is in contradiction to the interests of the exploiter classes, are as a rule subjected to every manner of persecution on the part of the ecclesiastical and government circles of the capitalist countries.

Priests formerly prosecuted for their political activity.

In Tsarist Russia the Church faithfully served the autocracy, the landowners and the capitalists, it justified the cruel exploitation of the popular masses and supported the exploiters in their struggle against the workers. It is common knowledge, too, that straightaway after the victory of the October Socialist Revolution, in the years of the Civil War and after, many religious organisations and groups of the clergy assumed a hostile position towards the Soviet power. In connection with this individual ministers of cults were prosecuted by the State not for religious activity, but for activity against the Government, directed against the interests of the Soviet people, in favour of internal counter-revolution and international imperialism. It is natural, there-

fore, that the struggle of the Soviet people against the enemies of the Socialist State included also a struggle against those reactionary representatives of the Church who indulged in activity which was hostile to the Soviet people. At the present time, as a result of the victory of Socialism and the liquidation of the exploiter classes in the USSR, the social roots of religion have been undermined and the base on which the Church relied has been destroyed. As facts testify, ministers of the Church, too, have in their majority taken up positions of loyalty towards the Soviet power. For this reason the struggle against religious prejudices should at the present time be regarded as an ideological struggle of the scientific, materialistic outlook against the anti-scientific, religious outlook.

The correction of the mistakes which have been permitted in anti-religious propaganda should not lead to a weakening of scientific atheist propaganda, which is a component part of the Communist education of the workers and which pursues the aim of spreading scientific, materialistic knowledge among the masses and freeing believing people from the influence of religious prejudices.

The Party cannot ignore religion.

While with regard to the State, religion is a private matter, and while for this reason the Church has been separated from the State, the Communist Party, which bases itself on the only correct scientific outlook - Marxism-Leninism with dialectical materialism as its theoretical foundation - cannot adopt an unconcerned and neutral attitude towards religion, which is an ideology which has nothing in common with science.

Our Party has always considered and still considers it to be its pressing duty to foster with every means and resource at its disposal the development of natural, technical and social sciences. Only on the basis of advanced science is an all-round and full exploitation of the riches of nature in the interests of all humanity possible. Only on the basis of science is it possible to achieve a new steep rise in the development of industry and agriculture, to ensure a further mighty development of the productive forces of the country, to increase productivity of labour and thereby considerably raise the material prosperity and cultural level of the people. Proceeding from this, the Communist Party is educating Soviet people in the spirit of a scientific outlook and is carrying on a struggle on the plane of ideas against religious ideology as an ideology which is anti-scientific. That science and religion are radically opposed to one another is obvious. If science bases itself on facts, on scientific experiment and on meticulously tested deductions borne out by life, any religion bases itself solely on biblical and other traditions, on fantastic inventions. Modern scientific achievements in the domain of natural and social sciences provide convincing refutation of religious dogmas. Science cannot reconcile itself to the religious conceptions about the life of nature and man, which are a fruit of invention and for this reason science is incompatible with religion. Science helps mankind to perceive more and more profoundly the objective laws of the development of nature and society, it helps to place the forces of nature in the service of man, science is conducive to the rise of man's consciousness and the growth of his culture. Religion, on the other hand, obscures man's consciousness, it dooms man to a passive attitude towards the forces of nature and shackles his creative activity and initiative.

The best people must be employed and given facilities.

Taking all this into account, the Party considers it essential to conduct profound, systematic scientific atheist propaganda, without permitting, however,

any offence to the religious sentiments of believers or ministers of cults.

The Central Committee draws attention to the need for basing scientific atheist propaganda on popular elucidation of the most important phenomena in the life of nature and society, on such questions as the structure of the universe, the origin of life and man on earth, on the achievements in the domain of astronomy, biology, physiology, chemistry and other sciences which confirm the correctness of materialist views on the development of nature and society.

The CPSU Central Committee emphasises that the conduct of scientific atheist propaganda requires the most attentive and careful attitude to the selection of lecturers, speakers and authors of pamphlets on anti-religious subjects. Only cadres qualified from a scientific point of view should be enlisted in this work: school teachers, instructors in technical colleges and higher educational institutions, medical practitioners, agricultural specialists, workers in the various scientific research units, workers of literature and art and others who are competent to provide a convincing clarification of the anti-scientific character of religion from the positions of the materialist outlook.

The CPSU Central Committee considers that positive results in educative work directed at overcoming religious survivals can be achieved only as a result of a further rise in the whole of our work of cultural enlightenment among the workers, of a considerable improvement in the activity of places of culture, clubs, libraries, reading rooms, lecture theatres, parks of culture and rest and other institutions of cultural enlightenment. For this reason the task of party, State and public organisations consists in radically improving the work of cultural enlightenment among the population and thereby achieving a still further rise of the cultural level of the workers.

(Signed) N. Khrushchev,

Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee.

(As a footnote to the above decree we publish the following report of a lecture on Historical Materialism by a professor of Moscow University.)

"Historical Materialism as a Science" was the subject of a public lecture delivered in Moscow recently by A.P. Gagarin, Doctor of Philosophy and Professor of Dialectical Materialism at Moscow University. In his lecture Gagarin argued that although the Party and Government recognised the political compromise that had been reached and appreciated the assistance the churches had given to Soviet foreign policy, and especially to the "peace" campaign, in fact the theoretical outlook of the churches was completely opposed to Communist ideology and historical materialism and must, therefore, be fought unceasingly.

Gagarin said there were still people who subscribed to the harmful belief that victory over Hitler had been granted by the will of God. The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate had recently published an article on Sergei Radonezhsky [a 14th Century Monk who became the patron saint of Russia, and a national hero], which described how the Saint had appealed to God to help the Russians to victory this was nonsense.

The Metropolitan Nikolai had recently published a doctrinal dissertation in three volumes, to show that life on earth was temporary and life in heaven eternal. Such an argument ignored the fundamentals of technical and material progress. The Moscow Patriarchate had encouraged the faithful to pray for the "immortal soul of Stalin". Stalin was, of course, immortal, but through his works and contribution to Communism. There was no soul.

Gagarin also complained that anti-religious propagandists had been guilty of naive over-simplifications. A verse in an Ivanovo newspaper, for instance, had run:

"Priests are thieves,
"The Deacon's a rogue;
"Give them money -
"They'll drink it away."

Such methods only offended people's feelings and did more harm than good.

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V. CHURCH AND INDUSTRIAL LABOUR IN JAPAN

(Notes from recent correspondence)

The beginnings of the Labour Movement in Japan, as in many other countries, came from a concern of Christian men. It was in 1897 that Railway Workers, Printers, Steel Workers unions were begun, all started and led by Christians. Some of these same men were also Temperance Society leaders. Some years later, Dr. Kagawa and men associated with him also gave leadership to the growing Labour Movement and held that lead until the Labour Movement was suppressed during the War Years.

The present programme of the United Church of Christ in Japan, however, grew from the close of the war. Spontaneously in many factories and offices there seemed to be expressed an interest in Christianity. Christian laymen and pastors were asked to teach Bible classes or answer questions at lunch periods and in afterwork periods. This ground swell combined with a new awareness of social responsibility on the part of the Church led to the action of the 1950 General Assembly in appointing both a Social Problems Study Commission and an Occupational Evangelism Committee.

The Social Problems Study Commission headed by President Kuwada of Union Theological Seminary issued in December 1953, after a year of study, the statement "The Labour Movement in Japan from the view-point of Christianity". It is a good beginning for a basis of contact between the church and labour. The text of this statement is as follows:

The Labour Movement in Japan from the Viewpoint of Christianity

1) The labour union movement, which has been well termed the "School of Democracy", is of great significance for the democratisation of Japan, especially for the democratisation of the economic and industrial system, and the realisation of economic independence. It may fairly be said that the destiny of Japan, now facing a severe crisis, depends upon what happens in the labour movement, which at the same time is the central support of the working masses. It is for this reason that we earnestly desire to see the development of a healthy labour movement.

2) Therefore, the government, instead of hindering and oppressing the labour movement, should encourage its healthy development as a social force for the establishment of democracy and of economic independence. At the same time employers in both public and private enterprise, cooperating on an equal plane, should recognise this movement, which has as its fundamental aim the rights of life and work, and working together should promote the democratisation, rationalisation, and independence of the national economy, industry and management, and should strive for the practical realisation of social justice.

3) But, most important of all, the labour union movement itself should correctly realise its own important mission for the reconstruction of Japan in its present crisis, and should establish itself on a sound and healthy basis. This is particularly true because of the undeniable fact that the labour union movement in our country, though suddenly greatly strengthened quantitatively in the social and intellectual confusion which was augmented by military defeat, remains very weak in quality. In this respect the leaders of the labour movement in Japan bear a very heavy responsibility. In other words, the labour movement should be so led that its members will make their place of work, instead of a stage for struggle a place for cooperation; instead of thinking only of their advantage as a class they think also of the reconstruction of the Fatherland. They must be taught to take seriously their duty together with their rights, their responsibility together with their freedom. We should learn in humility that in England the labour unions, which are a strong and stabilising force in the government and national economy through their realisation of a balanced democracy and of social justice, are not organisations whose guiding spirit is based on the Marxist principle of class struggle, but rather on the Christian tradition.

4) The Christian church must recognise sufficiently and have due appreciation of the importance of the labour movement, as stated above, for the democratisation and economic independence of Japan. Furthermore, it is hoped that the Christian church, through evangelism, education and study, can render great service to the development of a sound labour movement based upon the Christian spirit instead of class struggle, as the church helps enhance the dignity of the individual, a spirit of toleration and cooperation, and an appreciation of social justice and social service.

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A visit to a mining centre in Japan

The weather was depressing on the day of our visit - a grey cloudy sky, hanging very low, and rain. The roads were muddy. It is one of the poorest parts of Japan and the economic situation is discouraging with many of the little mines closed, and a great number of miners unemployed, with little or no relief through Unemployment Insurance. The communist group among the miners is strong.

We were received by the directorate of the Miners Labour Union, in one of the rooms of the Union building. To call it a building is an euphemism. It was a run down, shabby, indescribably dirty ramshackle place with cigarette stubs on the floors, wet mud on the corridor floors. Either you do not see the surroundings or you must have an unextinguishable idealism to be able to stand it.

The Labour Union is in no sense Christian, but they are grateful to the Church for the clothing and goods distributed to non-Christians in this area. Gratitude was expressed to us by one of the directors of the Labour Union, who expressed the idea that he had never had much to do with religious organisations, but that it had been a revelation to him to see that the Church cared for the needy in his country.

Nothing embarrasses more than to be looked at with humble and servile eyes as the wonderful bringers of surpluses from the wealthy countries of the West. How to deal with the moral problems created, is not yet clear to me. Somehow and some day we must learn to direct all this gratefulness from ourselves to Jesus Christ. It is a problem and will remain a problem for some time, until the solution is given to us.

There is nothing more revolting than Asian poverty. The very roots of life lay bare in the poverty. Grey huts made of wood, a wet ankle deep muddy path leading to a couple of huts. To see it moves one either to tears or the preaching of revolution!

The pastor is a pastor of the United Church. He was able to buy a wet paddy field which is much cheaper than any other piece of soil, had part of it filled up with earth and the church was built. He has about 100 members from this and the surrounding area. The church serves at the same time as a sort of stockpiling place, and we saw drums of powdered milk, gifts from several Japanese churches. We had a long talk with the pastor in a room in his church. He is a remarkable man, with great feeling for social service. .....

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VI. STATEMENT OF THE CHURCH OF THE MINAHASA (INDONESIA) ON COMMUNISM

(The Christian Evangelical Church of the Minahasa at its last synod meeting - Oct. 26-29, 1954 - discussed the problem of Church and Communism in the light of the situation of society in the Minahasa. The synod issued a statement following the meeting and later in December, 1954, a pastoral letter was circulated to all Congregations of the Church interpreting and explaining the statement. These two statements, published below, are of special importance in that this is the first time a Church in Indonesia has expressed itself on this issue.)

- S T A T E M E N T -

The Synod of the Geredja Masehi Indjili Minahasa (Christian Evangelical Church of the Minahasa), in her meeting of October 26, 27, 28, 29, 1954, after having heard Dr. J. Leimena's lecture on Church and Communism, and after having heard and discussed the present situation of society in the Minahasa, also afte having taken account of the powers which are capturing and binding the thoughts and views of many people in this area, after thorough discussions, makes the following statement:

1. The Church rejects the teachings of Communism as an ideology because the understanding which Communism holds of man and history is contrary to the Bible. The Church rejects all demands of every ideology which binds man in a totalitarian way. Although Communism states that it fights for justice, the Church rejects the methods of use of force to reach this aim.

2. It is the Lord's will that man shall have life, freedom, truth, justice and peace. Therefore the Church, as the visible Token of the Kingdom of God in this world, has the duty and always will endeavour, in accordance with her own ways and principles, to take an active part in building up Society in all its different fields.

3. The Church which proclaims salvation of man spiritually and materially, has the task to take an active part in endeavouring to build a responsible society, that is a society where man can work according to his responsibility to justice and public order; a society where those who hold political authority and economic power are responsible to God and to the people over which they rule.

4. In rejecting Communism, the Church also rejcts all other ideologies which regard and treat man as mere means which can be sacrificed to reach an economic or political goal for a specific group in society.

Tomohon, 29 October 1954

Executive Committee, Synod
Geredja Masehi Indjili Minahasa

Chairman — M. Sondakh
Secretary — J.F. Parengkuan

* * *

Pastoral letter of the Christian Evangelical Church of the Minahasa concerning Communism

To all Congregations within the Christian
Evangelical Church of the Minahasa

Congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ!

As you know, the last meeting of the Synod of the Christian Evangelical Church of the Minahasa has published a statement concerning the Church's opinion about Communism. It has indeed become clear in that last Synod-meeting that many Church-members have been made uncertain by the Communist tendencies, and

that they have been influenced by them, consciously or unconsciously. This has urged the Synod-meeting to give advice and to point out to all Church-members a danger which is in conflict with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Synod hopes that each Church-member be more conscious of his (her) calling as a follower of Jesus Christ in this world of today, and more united in the expectation of the coming of the Kingdom of God, which is the Hope of the whole Church of Christ.

The Church plainly rejects Communism, because its doctrine as well as its methods are clearly in conflict with the will of God, which is revealed in the witness of the Bible. The Church cannot accept an ideology which does not want to acknowledge the existence of God who is Lord over history and over the life of men. The Church rejects Communism because it rejects all totalitarian powers, which in the end treat men not as men whom God created in his own image and after his likeness. Man as a creation of God, is responsible, not only to his neighbours, but in the first place to God.

The Church rejects each doctrine which does not acknowledge the existence of sin and evil in all men, whatever layer of society he belongs to. And only by Jesus Christ who has been crucified, can the sin of man be forgiven.

In the same way the Church cannot agree with the ruthless methods used by totalitarian groups to oppose their adversaries. Only the love of Jesus Christ can make this world free.

While rejecting Communism the Church does not aim at standing side by side and together with those who form an anti-Communist front. The Church does not agree with those who oppose Communism by forceful ways, as the prophet Zechariah says: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit".

But the Church may not take a standpoint of only rejecting. The Church rejects Communism because it has a positive message, namely the Gospel of Jesus Christ. A message of salvation and freedom for all men, also especially for the weak ones, for the have-nots, for the oppressed and those who are treated with no regard for basic human rights. And therefore the Church and every Church-member should be concerned about the human fate, and with word and deed endeavour to build a responsible society, where man acknowledges responsibility to God as well as to the neighbour. It is the Lord's will that man shall have life, freedom, truth, justice and peace. Therefore it is the duty of every Church-member to work to erect these tokens of the Kingdom of God wherever he may be, in the midst of society.

It is a great mistake when the Church remains silent in face of problems in society and when it lets disorder and injustice go on. Often the law of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God ... and thy neighbour as thyself!" is not longer found in daily life. This is the Constitution of the Kingdom of God. And this must at all times become the basis of life of every Church-member.

When the Church rejects Communism, it should be more diligent in proclaiming the salvation of man spiritually and materially. May the Church and each local congregation be more diligent in their efforts to erect tokens of the Kingdom of God in their lives and in the midst of society.

This means that the Church and the local congregation should live by their faith in Jesus Christ, by the grace and love of God, and continue to witness, to proclaim the coming again of Jesus Christ, the King of all kings.

Finally, when the Church rejects Communism, this does not mean that the Church rejects the people who follow the Communist ideology. The Church is called to serve all people, also those who have lost their way. The Church must serve them by showing them the true salvation and hope which can only be found in Jesus Christ, the Lord of life and the Lord of the World!

Let us, as a Church and as followers of Jesus Christ, faithfully and unitedly, joyfully and full of hope, with faith and prayers, work to fulfil our calling in all fields of life, looking for the coming and the consummation of the Kingdom of God in all its glory!

Tomohon, December 1954

Moderamen Synod
Evangelical Christian Church of the Minahasa

Chairman, M. Sondakh — Secretary, J.F. Parengkuan

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VII. SOCIAL ACTION IN A BOMBAY SLUM

(The following is a report of a visit to a student service project in India. The report appeared originally in "Social Action", the magazine of the Indian Institute of Social Order, a Roman Catholic centre for social study and teaching. Rev. J. D'Souza is the director of the Institute and author of the report.)

The slum is Dabholkar Adda in Ambewady, on the outskirts of the city (Bombay). Breaking off from the main highway, you go along tortuous lanes and alleys narrow and unkempt, where peddlers of all kinds encumber the ground. But these lanes have still some semblance of decency compared with the low-lying area when they end and give place to the most depressing cluster of huts and improvised shanties which radiate from the slum in all its pristine squalor. There is an open space before these wretched dwellings begin and at one end of it are the ruins of a cotton godown which had been burnt down some months before. A part of this ruin, cleaned up, floored and roofed with borrowed tarpaulins, was the encampment of the students. They were forty of them, most of them boys and a few girls. They were drawn from all communities, Hindus, Christians, Parsees and Muslims; the majority being Hindus. There was nothing of the dandified undergraduate about them: they were preparing to go out for manual work when I went there, and were wearing working clothes half dirtied by earlier labour. Amidst them was the principal, Fr. Balaguer, also in shirt sleeves and preparing to go out with them with pickaxe in hand.

They gave me a cordial and simple welcome. I was on the lookout to see if there was any look of superiority and sense of conscious virtue, and I found none. Soon they trooped, the boys to work on clearing and smoothing out the narrow and dirty alleys, scarcely wider than a footpath at times, which served as roads in this human anthill. Some were engaged in digging up a water pipe which they wanted to replace by a thicker one. The girls went to an improvised dispensary to hand out remedies to simple ailments, or to gather the children for

games. Fr. Balaguer wanted me to go round the place and in his company I visited these humble dwellings where over 3000 people lived in conditions which I can only say were indescribable. These little huts were built with the flimsiest of materials, bits of wall here and there, supplemented by crumbling planks, bamboo matting, bits of canvas, gunny bags, and roofed over for the most part by flattened kerosene tins rusty and dirty looking. The height was not more than five feet in some cases. Yet, would the reader believe that the lodgers of these tenements have to pay rent for this? A little room, maybe seven feet by six occupied by a young couple and their baby was secured for a payment of six rupees per month. These six rupees were paid to an enterprising contractor who had put up the wretched shed and who, out of these six rupees, had to pay a share to the owner of the land.

Heading our way through these shacks we came to a spot which had been cleaned up by the students during the previous year and where they had constructed a cement platform for fixing two or three water taps. The little groups around this could draw their water in conditions of relative cleanliness. But a little to the left of this I saw a sight which I shall not easily forget. All the drainage of that part of the slum had flowed down and gathered into a little hollow around which were dozens of tenements. A poisonous scum had gathered over the fetid waters. Little children were splashing in the slush at the edge of this pool. On one side was a mound made up of all the rubbish and filth of the neighbourhood, including dead kittens and puppies. A heavy sickening stench hung on over the place. I was told by the poor people that when it rains heavily the area is flooded and the filth of the pool goes floating into the dwellings.....

Into these cells of misery the students of St. Xavier's have brought the bright lustre of their friendliness and the aid of their energetic work. I saw them digging like professional labourers with implements not particularly sharp, stopping now and then to exchange a joke. They have come to be known and loved in these quarters. The good people looked on them first with amusement and then with respect; and then they themselves came along joining the work and helping themselves. Their plan was, in two or three days from then, to get a bull-dozer promised by a friend of the College and break up the mound of rubbish and fill the pool and find an outlet for the drainage.

On certain evenings there are cinema shows or games and amusements for the elders. That gives the students the chance of engaging in conversation with them, and without looking like wise people who have come to teach them, they slip in bits of instruction and advice regarding better living - health and sanitation, thrift and hard work, a knowledge of their rights and duties as citizens. Thus slowly the neighbourhood is being cleaned up and roused into common action for their own betterment.

I left those depressing surroundings with strongly mingled feelings. There was sadness at the thought of this mass of misery at the doorsteps of a proud city, as indeed of most of our bigger cities. But there was also hope and obscure feeling of joy; not so much at the example of the friendliness and simple goodness of the students who were working there, at their sense of solidarity with their poor brothers, though that was something to be thankful for. My hope and joy came from what I had seen on the faces of those poor men and women huddled in their huts. Wherever they could, they had struggled to keep the interior of their sheds clean and decent. There was some little decoration here and there, a picture of a god or a goddess, of Mahatma Gandhi or Pandit Nehru. They loved their children and their faces beamed when we said a kind word to the brighteyed

little things running around us. In the corner of one little hut a shy young mother was nursing her baby. The tenderness on her face was a sight to warm th heart. There was patience and a subdued cheerfulness on their faces and in som places chatter and gay laughter. In the midst of all this degradation one saw elements of refinement and goodness. If Government and men of good-will do for these unhappy people even a fraction of what is due to them, they will never listen to the gospel of hatred.

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